WORDS & PICS: **Big Dave**

(ROAD) WINNING WAYS

Korean manufacturer Daelim is a new player on the local motorcycle scene, its Roadwin R 250 F1 impressing with its spec, performance and build quality.

The job started out with ferrying a Moto Guzzi V7 out to the Press Ride Day at Maraetai, south east of Auckland (KR July '10).

After snapping a few shots of the Ed and Mike on the test bikes I announced my intention to bale. But with the V7 still in demand the question was; on what?

"You could take the wee Daelim," one of the 'Guzzi guys offered. "It's got to go back to the warehouse."

"Sure thing, love to," I replied knowing full well that my 195cm was going to look rather comical on the 250. I even did a lap of the traffic island outside the venue before wringing its neck Auckland-bound.

I was imagining the angle for the story as I headed back, the long way, over Twilight road . . . 'Grizzled journalist impressed by Korean upstart', or something along those lines was how it was panning out.

Hi-tech Roadwin 250R F1 is just one of a number of small capacity motorcycles and scooters made by Korean company Daelim. Look, feel, spec and built quality is a match for similar models from Korea and Taiwan.

GLAD OF THE OPPORTUNITY

In fact it turned out that I was glad of the opportunity to ride the (to give it its full name) Daelim Roadwin R 250 FI. I rode it a fair way longer than I actually had to because I was rather enjoying riding it.

After getting back to town I did some errands and ran around town on it too.

"Oh come on Dave," said everyone incredulously when I tried to explain why. But it comes back to my oft repeated mantra; 'it's more fun to ride a slow bike fast – than a fast bike slow,' and I had a heap of fun pinning this unit through the first few gears.

I also have to admit that I couldn't actually tell you where it was made until after the ride and I got busy wit' Google.

To make sure you know, I lifted this quote from a Daelim site:

"Daelim motorcycles and scooters are made to the highest level of build quality by the Daelim Motor Company, the largest manufacturer of motorcycles in Korea and one of the largest motorcycle makers in the world. The highly successful Daelim Group has 13 subsidiaries operating globally in the engineering, construction, petrochemical, finance, leisure and real estate industries."

FAVOURABLE FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Interesting, because first impressions were quite favourable and I thought that someone who knew what they were doing had built the machine.

Heading towards Whitford on the open road it cranked up to touring speeds nicely.

QUICK FLICK

Bike: DAELIM ROADWIN R
Type: 250cc commuter
Engine: Liquid-cooled fuel-injected DOHC 4-valve 90° 246.9cc 4-stroke single
Frame: Beam-type steel
Wheelbase: 1390mm
Seat height: 780mm
Fuel tank capacity: 15L
Dry weight: 165 kg
Price: $5,995
Test bike: Triumph NZ
More info: www.daelimmotor.com

I was quite impressed with its road manners, stability, how…nicely it went…and how surprisingly comfortable I was.

The liquid-cooled DOHC 4-valve 250cc single cylinder engine produces around 17kw (22 horsepower) and 14nm (10.32 ft lbs) and it enjoys a dose of throttle.

It needs to be worked somewhat because by the time all the bodywork, radiator and other fruit is loaded, it weighs in at 162kg.

This means that it does need a good handful to get it away from the lights, but get away OK it does. I had no trouble dealing with the queues through Botany and general duties around town when I got back to the metropolis. The tin tops receded in the mirrors quite satisfactorily.

STABLE AND COMFORTABLE

Its stability comes from the 1,393mm wheelbase and pretty relaxed geometry. Reasonably sized tyres (110/70 at the front and 140/60 at the back) mounted to 17 inch rims also helps. As does the longish wheelbase.

The seat height is 780mm, meaning that real size Kiwis will fit nicely. It's not a tiny bike and it can carry a reasonably stoic (comfort-wise) passenger for a good distance on its 15-litre fuel tank.

The 5-speed gearbox clicked nicely into place and the only time it got cantankerous was when trying to find neutral when the engine wasn't running (pushing it around the garage). Otherwise the drivetrain was all good.

The twin front and single rear disc brakes do a nice job of hauling it up too.

Doing commuter and city delivery duty was also quite enjoyable. The widest point is at the mirrors and it meant scooting around the 'burbs was a hoot.

GOOD ROAD PRESENCE

It also has quite good road presence and it's a reasonably well-presented unit.

The stickers on the fairing are a little too obviously 'stickery,' but the paint and finish on the demo unit is pretty good and the overall appearance I found to be quite attractive, almost reminiscent of a 955i Daytona at the front.

The cockpit is finished and lined better than some $20,000 bikes and the mix of analogue and LCD instruments was far more comprehensive than I expected.

Cranking it around Twilight Road or dealing with the traffic on Remuera Road was surprisingly rewarding and again I was impressed by the overall capability of the small capacity machine. The monoshock rear end worked well, in fact the whole machine worked pretty well, but, here's the thing I thought worked best about the Daelim, for commuter and entry buyers; it's under $6K.

Sure it's a single rather than the more popular (in the 250cc commuter category) twin, but at $5,995 you get impressive bang for your buck.

It will commute nicely, should prove economical and is pretty good fun for a strop on a leisure ride too.

At $6k it is a bona fide bargain! **KR**

At under $6K the Roadwin represents keen value

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